(10) The old bridges constructed by the Irrigation Maramat Department in the interests of cultivation were left in a state of complete disrepair. The bridges, culverts &c., that were still required in certain places, were not attended to by the Government.

(11) The order of the Government empowering the officers of the Irrigation Department to distribute the water from the tank reservoirs was a source of hardship to the ryots and of friction between them and the department. The ryots had long enjoyed the privilege and were still exercising it. The staff sanctioned for the purpose was being employed otherwise.

(12) An Irrigation Committee was originally started with a view to ensure hearty co-operation between the Irrigation Department and the ryots. The Committee was not continued, the non-official members thereof were excluded and the Committee gradually became purely a conference of officers. That had tended to alienate the sympathies of the ryots.

To remedy the above defects, the Member suggested the following measures to be adopted:—

(1) The Kodayar reservoir and channels should be opened and closed on the 1st Idavom and 30th Makarom respectively every year.

(2) The Irrigation Department should not have the right to distribute water to the fields from the tanks and channels, and the order of the Government dated 5th December 1904 should be enforced.

(3) The disposal of tank-beds by public auction and their conversion into wet lands should be wholly stopped.

(4) The Pillapettu Dam in the Pazhayar River should be maintained and under-sluices constructed therein.

(5) The Pazhayar river should be widened wherever necessary and the damaged banks restored.

(6) A Committee should be appointed to enquire into the question of grazing grounds for Nanjinad and such grounds opened according to the recommendations of the Committee.

(7) Convenient roads should be opened to facilitate communication from one block to another under the various channels.

(8) Petitions relating to irrigation matters should be exempted from the levy of court fees.

(9) Permanent sluices should be constructed in respect of lands between the 7th and 19th miles of the Tovala channel, by the ryots and the Irrigation Department conjointly.

(10) Old irrigation bridges should be repaired, new ones constructed wherever necessary and dams and culverts put up, so as to help the storage of *manamari* water for cultivation.

(11) A Board consisting of officials and non-officials should be appointed to regulate the distribution of water amongst the several irrigation *kals* and channels.

(12) The quantity of water in the Kodayar reservoir lying above the level of the Kodayar channel should be published in the Gazette every week in the vernaculars of the country.

The Member also presented a memorial containing the above representations signed by several ryots of Tovala and Agastiswaram.

*Dewan's reply.*—The memorial presented by the Member and the suggestions made by him will be referred to the Chief Engineer for report.

### 44. Certain difficulties in the system of cultivation in the Padmanabhapuram Division and suggestions for remedying the same.

*Mr. T. Kumara Pillai* (Member, Kalkulam taluk) dwelt at considerable length on the circumstances which contributed to the poverty and agricultural indebtedness of the people of the State. In that connection, he referred to the Court Fees Regulation and pointed out how the enhancement of the court fees had increased the cost

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of litigation and how the interpretation and practical working of the law had caused untold hardship to the people. The people had to represent their grievances and wants to the Revenue and Irrigation Departments almost every day of their lives. In most cases, the object of the petitions would be to remind the officers of their legitimate duties such as to let in water to prevent failure of crops, to repair a sluice here or to remove the silt from a channel there. In all such cases, the officers were insisting on a half-rupee stamp being affixed to each petition. Further, the ryots had often to present several petitions about the same grievance and for each such petition they were now required to spend half-a-rupee. To quote another instance, when application was made to the taluk offices for copies of *thandaper* accounts of several years, half-a-rupee stamp was insisted on being affixed to each year's accounts by some Tahsildars. He requested that the Government might be pleased to consider the propriety of compelling the poor ryots to pay their hard-earned cash in the purchase of stamps for such matters of every day occurrence, but of great importance to the ryots.

He next proceeded to detail the disabilities of the ryots of South Travancore in the matter of cultivation and proposed certain suggestions for remedying the same. The disabilities were:—

(1) The supply of water for the cultivation of the converted dry and garden lands was quite insufficient. The conversions were effected by the people on the strength of the assurance contained in the G. O., dated the 6th April 1908, that "ample facilities should be given to the holders of lands (dry and garden) to effect a conversion of them into wet". But many of the converted lands were subsequently brought under "irregular conversions" and under the later G. O., water would not be guaranteed to such lands. In effecting the conversions the ryots had cut down many valuable trees, but the tax on those trees had nevertheless to be paid till the next settlement. There was in addition the contingency of their having to pay the water cess also. The ryots were therefore in an embarrassing situation.

(2) The Irrigation Department was not able to make the full supply of water required for all the lands included in the blocks—the old wet lands and the new conversions. That was particularly so in the case of lands under the Thiruvithancode Channel, which was not sufficiently wide to contain the required water supply. All the lands—whether within the blocks or outside—suffered alike in the matter of water-supply and that was sure to discourage the process of conversions.

(3) The Irrigation Department controlled the distribution of water in the main channels and the opening of the sluices. The distribution of water in the subsidiary field channels was left to the ryots themselves and, owing to that arrangement, the poorer ryots often failed to get any water for their lands.

To obviate the above difficulties, the Member suggested that either water should be freely supplied to all the new conversions, or, if that was not possible, remission of the land tax should be allowed to the lands outside the blocks till the water cess on them was remitted, and in the case of lands within the blocks, similar remissions should be granted on all occasions when the crops failed or the lands lay fallow. As regards the distribution of water in the field channels, the Irrigation Department should control the same in the same way as in the main channels. He also suggested that the disposal of tank-beds should be held in abeyance for some time until all the lands remaining to be converted into wet lands were so converted, and it was found that the reservoir could supply enough water to all those lands. His reason for making the proposal was that no two engineers agreed as to the real capacity of the Kodayar reservoir, and if future experience should show that the reservoir was not of sufficient capacity to supply water to the old lands and the already converted and to-be-converted lands, it would not then be possible to take back the tank-beds once they were sold. If, however, the Government had no apprehension on that account, the really useless tank-beds might be disposed of, after previous consultation with the ryots of the locality, as laid down in the G. O.

Another difficulty pointed out by the Member was in the rearing of cattle. There was no proper grazing ground and, during the hot season especially, the cattle suffered seriously from want of fodder or grass. He understood that five blocks of lands were reserved for cattle grazing in the taluks of the Division, but they were quite unfit for the purpose and neither the ryots nor the officers themselves knew

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where the lands were. He also stated that, with the degeneration of the cattle, great difficulty was experienced in securing cattle manure. He therefore suggested that grazing grounds should be set apart in every *pakuthi* as far as possible and that, in the case of *pakuthies* adjoining reserved forests, the cattle of the locality should be freely allowed to graze in the forests as in the past.

Another class of difficulty which affected cultivation related to green manure. The manure had become scarce owing to the following circumstances:—

(i) With the introduction of Kodayar water, gardens had been fast converted into wet lands.

(ii) The ryots used to obtain the timber required for agricultural implements from the forests. They were no longer permitted to do so and they had therefore to cut down the manure trees for the purpose.

(iii) With the introduction of passes and permits by the Forest Department, the people could not easily procure fuel for their use and therefore they had to fell the green manure trees for fuel.

In the absence of cattle manure and green manure, the only alternative was to use other artificial manures proposed by the Director of Agriculture. But the poverty and agricultural indebtedness of the people had made it impossible for them to go in for those manures. He therefore requested that the Government should permit the ryots to collect green manure from the reserved forests free of all cost.

The Member proceeded to point out the need for the extension of cultivation and the demand for more land for the same. He suggested that portions of the forests which were suitable for cultivation should be assigned to the ryots at reduced rates of *tharavila* and assessment.

In conclusion, he requested that the Government might be pleased to improve the practical utility of the Agricultural Department by widening its scope of activities, that an economic and industrial survey of the State be started to ascertain the economic condition of the people and that a Committee composed of officials and non-officials be appointed to enquire into the difficulties of cultivation in South Travancore and to devise measures to overcome the same.

*Dewan's reply.*—The representations of the Member in regard to levy of Court-fees will be referred to the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil for report and necessary orders issued to see that no fees not contemplated by the Regulation are levied on applications.

The other representations and suggestions of the Member will be referred to the Heads of Departments concerned and necessary action taken on receipt of their reports.

**45. The desirability of establishing a manure and seed depot in the Chirayinkil taluk.**

*Mr. K. N. Parameswaran Pillai* (Member, Chirayinkil taluk) said that paddy and cocoanut cultivation formed the main occupation of the people of the taluk. The ryots experienced much difficulty in getting the required manure from within the taluk, and they were unable to go to Quilon and other places to procure it, in view of their poverty and the heavy transport charges. He therefore prayed for the establishment of a manure and seed depot in the taluk, and added that it would be of benefit not only to the people of the taluk, but also to the agriculturists of five *pakuthies* in the Nedumangad and Trivandrum taluks.

*Dewan's reply.*—The Director of Agriculture will be asked to report on the Member's representation.

**46. The necessity for an economic and industrial survey of the State and for devising a scheme for the development of its economic and industrial resources.**

*Mr. C. Sankara Menon, B. A., B. L.* (Member, T. I. C., Quilon) pointed out that the subject had been pressed on the attention of the Government during the previous sessions of the Assembly and that it was time that the Government abandoned the old *laissez-faire* policy in the matter and grappled with the question seriously. The economic disturbance brought about by the European war had opened the eyes of the people and the Governments in India and in England to the solution of the many problems connected with industries and commerce and various

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